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FOR NEA/FO (ELISA CATALANO); ISN/RA (RICHARD NEPHEW); IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/25/2019

TAGS: IAEA IR NO PREL

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN VIEWS ON IRAN NEXT STEPS

REF: STATE 120288

Classified By: Political and Economic Counselor Cherrie S. Daniels for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: In response to reftel demarche points, the senior Norwegian MFA official we spoke to said Norway is distressed at Iran's recent spurning of the P5+1 proposal. The Norwegian government recommends that new sanctions be fine tuned so as not to exhaust the political option all at once, strongly hopes for a Security Council resolution by consensus rather than vote, and sees some positive signs from Russia. End Summary.

¶12. (C) Poloff met with Knut Langeland, Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to discuss reftel demarche on November 24. Langeland said Norway shares the U.S.'s distress that the Iranians are not taking any steps that restore international confidence, though as a matter of policy, Norway wants a political solution to this crisis.

¶13. (C) Langeland agreed that given Iran's behavior, new political pressure must be applied. He said that new sanctions should be "fine tuned" so that the international community does not exhaust the political avenue all at once. He said that Norway is attentively anticipating the U.S.'s next move on this matter, would support new sanctions, and will probably join the upcoming EU statement on Iran.

¶14. (C) Langeland emphasized that it would be far superior to get new Security Council sanctions through a consensus decision, rather than via a vote, explaining that it is very important that the message be that the international community "as such" does not accept Iran's behavior -- not just Western countries. Whether such a decision is possible, in Langeland's view, depends on how far the sanctions go. He opined that the Non-aligned Movement countries on the Security Council would not present a problem; rather, Russia and China would be the keys. Of these two, Russia would be most significant, in his view. Langeland said that in a meeting several months ago between former U.S. Ambassador Whitney and Foreign Minister Stoere, Stoere said that Iran's behavior presented a challenge not only to the nonproliferation agenda, but to the Security Council itself, as Iran is breaching international law as laid down by the Security Council.

¶15. (C) Regarding Iran's motivations, Langeland alluded to the many different justifications made by different layers of the Iranian government and society, including national pride, a capacity to acquire nuclear weapons in the future, and a positive desire for a limited confrontation with the United States which would allow the hard liners to rally the population behind them and crush dissent even further.

¶16. (C) Langeland concluded, in a hopeful vein, that there were some good signs coming out of Russia of late, including

its recent decision to withhold delivery of the S-300 defense system and its decision not to finish preparing the Bushehr nuclear reactor. Langeland characterized the former point as more significant than the latter, which he termed "somewhat symbolic."

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